

THE MADRAS LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Monday, the 2nd February 1948.

The House met in the Council Chamber, Fort St. George, at three of the clock, Mr. President (THE HON. SRI R. B. RAMAKRISHNA RAJU) in the chair.

[Note.—An asterisk (*) at the commencement of a speech indicates revision by the Member.]

RESOLUTION ON THE ASSASSINATION OF MAHATMA GANDHI.

* THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—Mr. President, Sir, I move this resolution on behalf of this House—

This Council is deeply grieved at the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of our Nation and the Architect of our Freedom, and places on record its profound sorrow at the irreparable loss the Nation has sustained. The only way in which we can pay our homage and tribute to our Great Leader is to follow the principles of Truth, Service and Ahimsa that he enunciated and practised in his exemplary life.'

Sir, patriotism, self-respect and honour demand this humble tribute of this House for the memory of the great man, who is no more. Mahatma Gandhi has joined the immortals. The whole world has burst out in horror and indignation over this ghastly murder. Mahatma was of the spirit eternal. He was brave and fearless as only such like him can be. To him life was an offer at the altar of Truth and Non-violence. He was the richest of men for he owned nothing in this world. Millionaires clung to him and placed their wealth at his disposal. He lived the life he preached and served mankind. To him there was no one high or low and he loved them all. He has made a historic and unique contribution to the history of the world. He has demonstrated the irresistible power of *ahimsa* in dealing with men and nations. That political freedom could be won through unadulterated moral virtues is perhaps a record which the world needed. Strangely enough he has become the victim of violence against which he has preached all his life. In this land of creeds and races of warring faiths it was left to him to prove the unity of life which pervades all human existence. He has joined the long list of immortals that staggered the world in their days. Gandhiji's life and teachings are a glorious record. Jesus Christ, Abraham Lincoln, Socrates, these are names we revere. Gandhiji came to us to live amidst us, made us see with our eyes the greatness of human personality as was depicted by him. Let us at least hold aloft the glowing banner of purity, selflessness and love and try and understand the eternal truths for which he stood. The Gandhian epoch is unforgettable in history. Born humble and low of an enslaved race, he could establish the strength of human spirit developed into an irresistible force by a right conduct. Be he of any faith or caste or creed, in him we found the response of an aching heart, a pining soul and an overflowing

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sympathy of love. We shall not forget it. He knew no distinction of high and low and he is more for the lowliest of the low for he loved them above all. With courage undaunted he declared his faith in stentorian voice which spread and reached the corners of the world as no other man has done. His death has made him more alive to us than ever before. Innocent children were his comrades and he has the highest regard for the womenfolk. To me he is a saviour. He took me by the hand in the streets of London when violence and hatred surged in my heart. He weaned me away from my madness. He won my heart, changed my faith and revealed to me the great lesson which books of knowledge could not reveal.

"Sir, I move this resolution."

MR. PRESIDENT:—"The question is that this House do pass a resolution in the following words:

'This Council is deeply grieved at the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of our Nation and the Architect of our Freedom, and places on record its profound sorrow at the irreparable loss the Nation has sustained. The only way in which we can pay our homage and tribute to our Great Leader is to follow the principles of *Truth*, *Service* and *Ahimsa* that he enunciated and practised in his exemplary life.'

K. UPPI SAHIB BAHADUR:—"Mr. President, Sir, we are assembled here to-day to bemoan the loss of Mahatma Gandhi. This is the blackest day in the history of this House because we have lost a guide, leader and soldier. Sir, nobody could ever think an assassin of all the people in the world would attempt the life of Mahatma Gandhi because I feel he has not done any injury to anybody on the face of the earth. He had been a lover of humanity all his life. He had been doing good to one and all. Sir, it was he who roused us from our slumber and lethargy and led us against an enemy who was armed to the teeth, and undaunted by his force of arms and only with moral weapons he led us to victory. We have lost such a man and words fail me at this juncture because it is only a few hours since this shock has overtaken us and I associate fully with all the sentiments expressed by my Hon. Friend, Dr. Rajan, and I support this resolution."

* SRI H. M. JAGANNATHAM:—"Mr. President, allow me to associate myself with the sentiments of sorrow expressed by previous speakers and pay my humble tribute to the greatness and glory of Mahatma Gandhi.

"Sir, I do not profess to be a Congressman nor a follower of Gandhiji. Indeed, the organization to which I have the honour to belong have often severely criticized him and some of his methods. But we were second to none in acknowledging his real greatness, his lofty ideals, his burning patriotism, and his passionate desire for the elevation of the untouchables. If to-day untouchability has been declared a crime in the statute book, it is due entirely to the inspiration and stimulus which Gandhiji, with the insight and vision so characteristic of him, imported into the movement.

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" Mr. President, I had the privilege of being brought into very close and intimate contact with Gandhiji. When he visited the city in 1927 I was the first leader of the scheduled castes to present him with the first welcome address on behalf of the untouchables. Later, in 1932, during the negotiations which preceded the Poona Pact, I was invited to Bombay to attend the emergency Conference convened by Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya. In the discussions which we held in the very presence of Gandhiji, we laid all our demands before him and how passionately we felt that separate electorates alone could give us a distinct political status and dignity. But Gandhiji was adamant and turning to Dr. Ambedkar, he said: ' Doctor, my life is in your hands ' to which Dr. Ambedkar replied, ' Well, it is not more precious to me than the fate of the 60 million untouchables inhabiting this country.' Mahatma Gandhi was quick to recognize the force of this argument and replied, ' You are quite right, Doctor.' In my experience this was the most remarkable instance of Gandhiji's greatness, of his readiness and fair-mindedness to recognize the opponents' point of view and going the whole hog to conciliate him. And here let me say that the Poona Pact would not have been accomplished nor Gandhiji's life saved in 1932 but for the conciliatory spirit shown by Gandhiji himself and the wisdom and statesmanship which Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Rajaji had shown in the negotiations.

" Sir, we, of the Schedule Castes Federation, disliked and disapproved of many of Gandhiji's methods. But we had no doubt of his sincerity of purpose, of his devotion to the cause of the untouchables, of his lofty patriotism and burning desire to see India freed of foreign domination. That he was destined to see his dream of Poorna Swaraj for India realized during his lifetime was a big thing. That he should be struck down by the assassin's bullet just at a moment when he was devoting all his energies to see internal peace and harmony established in India is the greatest tragedy that has befallen our country. Sir, while mourning Gandhiji's death I hope that his wise advice and noble example will continue to guide the Government as the corner-stone of all their politics."

* DR. SIR A. LAKSHMANASWAMI MUDALIYAR :—" Mr. President, Sir, words somehow seem almost inappropriate on an occasion like this. I sincerely feel that when the heart is full there is not much room for speech-making. However, it is but meet that on such a solemn occasion an opportunity should be given to some of us to give expression to the anguish that we all felt and the sorrow that we have been experiencing during the last few hours, ever since that horrible news flashed through the four corners of the globe that Mahatma Gandhi was no more and he was the victim of a cruel crime, the like of which the world has not hitherto seen. I have been trying to see the various episodes that have occurred from time to time in the history of humanity when great men have been struck, but it is unexampled in historical memory that a person of his venerable age should have been the victim—one who had devoted himself almost exclusively to the service of mankind and who was even then striving his level best to uplift his country and to instil into his countrymen something of

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the great messages that have been handed to us from time immemorial by the great and noble souls that have departed. There is not another instance, Sir, in the whole of the history of the human race when such an unfortunate crime had been committed and in a manner that can only provoke the deepest kind of sorrow in every one of us. He was to come up to the prayer meeting, to stand there with folded hands and invoke the divinity in him and in all others. Just at that time the culminating event happened and a bullet was driven into his heart. When the news was spread all over the world every one of us felt that a bullet had gone into our own heart. It was such that we could hardly bear the sorrow of the event. It is not a mere expression of feeling, it is what everybody actually felt. High and low, rich and poor, educated and illiterate, citizens in the towns and the villagers in the field, everybody felt the sorrow of it in a manner that he could not have felt except for his dearest ones. The whole world stood aghast. Yet, Sir, what is the strength of this poor frail frame, 78 years old, which has convulsed the world not only during his lifetime but even more so on the day of the sad event when he passed away? He had no riches, no pomp, no regal glory, no power to exercise and no patronage to bestow. Yet, remarkable as it may seem, the truth is that verily Mahatma Gandhi represented the soul of India, that soul which has always quickened itself to the naked fakir and not to the purpled prince sitting on high, that soul which has always worshipped those who discard everything worth possessing and lived far away from the madding crowd and exercised an influence far beyond any human mind can conjure. That was Mahatma Gandhi. Is it any wonder, Sir, that we his countrymen should have felt his loss more than anybody else? Think of a person who after two great world wars and after all the tragedies that he had witnessed still spoke of *ahimsa* and non-violence and preached it in season and out of season, never wavering from the path laid down by him forty years ago, when he was struggling in a remote part of the world! Nobody would have been more sincere, more steadfast and loyal to the ideals throughout his long career. That was Mahatma Gandhi. We his countrymen to-day mourn his loss. But it is not the mourning that he wants. His spirit is with us though his body has been consumed by flames. Nothing matters so much as the soul. On that great day, when India was celebrating her independence, and when his countrymen were rejoicing, where was Mahatma Gandhi? His heart was not in it. He felt the anguish of it. He asked the question: 'What shall it profit a great nation if it gains the whole world and loses its own soul?' Since that day, the Mahatma has asked himself time and again, 'What shall it profit India if she gains independence but loses her own soul?'. To-day the whole world is grieved, but grief by itself would be a poor recompense from those who have looked upon Mahatma Gandhi as the greatest of world leaders. We have heard of his message, we have lived in a generation which produced a Mahatma Gandhi. We are all his countrymen and we have in our own little way tried to assimilate some of his teachings. I cannot say that anyone of us, the tallest of us, the nearest to him, could say that we have achieved all that we had hoped to

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achieve either through personal contact with him or through the preachings that we have listened to in every village and town. But this much I feel, Sir, that we who revere his memory, if we are to revere his memory for all time, what shall be our attitude? The resolution that is placed before the House gives some indication of what is expected of every Indian. To-day, Sir, in a few circles, I am sorry to say that there is a feeling which is not what Mahatma Gandhi himself would have wished. At a supreme moment, a few days before his end, on the occasion when he knew who was his assailant, he preached the doctrine of tolerance—that we must all forgive and forget—in the inimitable way of another great personality who said 2,000 years ago, 'Father, forgive them; they know not what they do.' In that spirit, may I not appeal to our countrymen to realize that the momentary anguish which may lead to anger—uncontrollable and insuppressible—is not the true way of following Mahatma Gandhi? The thing has been done and our duty now is to see how we can follow the lead of Mahatma Gandhi. How we can wean away the unfortunate section—small indeed, I hope—which has somehow or other, out of madness perhaps which sometimes catches humanity, gone astray. That is our first task.

"Secondly, let us remember—all of us, Hindu and Muslim, Sikh and Christian—that he lost his life for a great cause, the cause of unity. To him there was no distinction and Hindu and Muslim were alike. It was in that noble endeavour that he lost his life. Therefore it behoves us all—Hindus and Muslims—to realize that if we are sincere in following the footsteps of Mahatma Gandhi, we should not have estrangements. Let us all learn to live as he intended that we should live, in brotherly love and affection, each holding the other as a person to be respected, to be loved and always to be comforted.

"Sir, it is not by trying to know what our rights are that we can succeed, but by knowing our responsibilities and duties. Mahatma Gandhi had no rights to claim; he had only duties to perform and responsibilities to shoulder. He shouldered them down to the last day in a manner that no other person could have shouldered. He has lighted a path for us to follow in his footsteps. In this year of sorrow, whatever may be our caste, creed or religion, whatever may be our political views which unfortunately divide us more than ever, whatever may be our status of life—rich or poor—may we not in this year of sorrow—for a full year must elapse according to the Hindu tradition for the sorrow to be over—may we not try to follow in whatever little respect it may be, the great teachings of the greatest of immortals of modern times? Let us thank the Lord that we are here. We are blessed indeed to have had Mahatma Gandhi as one of our countrymen. We are blessed indeed to have had his revered example before our eyes. And blessed we will be if we cherish his great teachings and follow his noble advice and keep it as a guide in our life."

* SRI D. KRISHNAMURTHY :—"Sir, it is difficult to find words for expressing the sorrow we feel on this occasion. India which has produced a Buddha has also produced in the modern

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age a Gandhi. He is a very rare combination of Christ, Buddha and Krishna. He has put into practice noble truths which stand for all time. He serves as a beacon light for humanity. The misfortune of it is that he has met with his death at the hands of a murderer who killed him for no specific reason. The teachings left behind him by Gandhiji will not perish. Christ was crucified but Christianity never perished. Gandhiji has been murdered, but Gandhism will not die. To-day every one of the thinking section of the world feels this great loss. He is the architect of the political independence of India. He fought for it from 1919 and got independence for India on the 15th August 1947. Hardly six months have elapsed and now on the 30th January he has been murdered. He has left behind him a heritage of ideals for us, foot-prints in the sands of time for us to follow and to be benefited. He has joined the immortals just like every savant and seer. He has made us see the fundamental truths of all religions. Here was a Gandhi and it is difficult to see the like of him again. In the cosmic evolution, it is difficult to define the process and understand the reasons for several acts. India which has produced an Asoka and Buddha has produced also a Gandhi. It will be for the future generations to appreciate it. We who are his contemporaries have got on our shoulders the responsibility of putting into practice as far as practicable and to the best of our ability, these noble lessons of truth, love, service and sacrifice and *ahimsa* that he has taught us. I associate myself with all that is said by the Hon. the Leader of this House."

* DR. V. K. JOHN :—" Mr. President, Sir, it has been said that Gandhiji is the father of the nation. He is not only the father of the nation, but the father of the human race. He does not belong to one nation or one race. He belongs to humanity as a whole. His life, his work and his passing away can be compared only to the life, work and passing away of Jesus Christ. Like Christ, he was the prince of peace. Like Christ he preached the gospel of love and non-violence. Not only he preached the gospel of love and non-violence, but like Christ he practised love and non-violence. Jesus Christ died on a Friday and Good Friday is observed all over the world. Mahatma Gandhi also died on a Friday and I hope the last Friday in the month of January every year will be a Good Friday, because we will remember that on that day passed away a man who by his life and service has endeared himself not only to the present generation, but to future generations also and to the human race as a whole.

" Mr. President, Sir, if we have to emulate his example and follow his teachings and precepts, I suggest we have a University or an Ashramam for which the State may grant a crore of rupees and all the citizens of the Province—every man and woman—may be given an opportunity of contributing according to his or her mite even a few annas each, so that we may collect another crore of rupees. The University may train young men and women for the service of humanity according to Gandhiji's ideas. We shall have a centre not only in Madras but in every district and taluk and

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village. That is the only way to commemorate the memory of that great man. If we have a University or an Āshramam on a large scale, we shall be able to train up hundreds and thousands of men and women for service.

" Another suggestion which I should like to make is that we should give due publicity to the noble work done by many Muslim leaders in telling their people that there should be no retribution against the Hindus and that properties taken from them should be restored to them. Gandhiji asked the Hindus to make restitution to the Muslims. Muslim leaders also asked the Muslims to make restitution to the Hindus. But I think there has not been sufficient publicity to the work done by the Muslim leaders who asked Muslims to make restitution to the Hindus. If that had been done, many misguided people would not have thought that while Mahatma Gandhi was asking the Hindus alone to make restitution, the Muslims were not doing the same. I know many Muslim leaders who have asked the Muslims to give back to the Hindus what they have taken from them. But there has not been sufficient publicity given to that.

" Sir, one thing which we who are considered to be leaders of public opinion can do is to preach the gospel of love and non-violence and carry out Gandhiji's message of love in our own lives. I join with the mover of the resolution and associate myself with all the sentiments that he has expressed."

MR. J. E. P. ROCHE VICTORIA :— " Sir, I associate myself with all the sentiments expressed by my hon. Friend, Mr. John. On behalf of the Christian community I wish to express our deep sorrow at the demise of the father of our nation. We call him father because he was not merely father of the nation; he was also the special protector of all communities in India including the Christian community. We, the members of Christian community, consider Mahatma Gandhi as our special protector; we also consider ourselves as his favoured children because in all his dealings he has been one of the foremost exponents of the Christian doctrines and principles. Though the whole community may not be able to express its sorrow, I am sure every one of the Christian community feels very great sorrow as every other community is feeling for our great hero. Only recently when some Christians were persecuted in Punjab, he came out with a defence and a pleading that they must be specially protected because he felt that we are only a handful of Christians and that we are peace-loving and co-operating with other communities in all matters. The Leader of the Catholic community, the Pope himself is now working for peace in Europe. He has also expressed his great sorrow at the passing away of our great leader—Mahatma Gandhi. He has also expressed deep regret on the taking away from our midst of our Mahatmaji. Our heart is so full and we are overwhelmed with so much sorrow that it is not possible to say whatever we want to say. Suffice it to say that we wholeheartedly join with the nation in mourning the loss of Mahatmaji. Gandhi is dead but long lives Gandhism."

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DR. SYED TAJUDDIN SAHIB :—“ Sir, with tear-dimmed eyes, with a greatly disturbed mind, with a broken heart and with every fibre and cell of my body burning, I stand before you at this gloomy hour when the greatest soul of the present age has been suddenly cut away from us. It has been like a dire bolt from the merciless blue. When the great mystic, Jalaluddin Rumi died—he was considered to be the prince of mystics—people of all religions and of all communities rushed to his house—for what purpose—to claim his body. Every one thought, every community thought that he belonged to his community. In the same way, all of us and every one of us feel that we have lost our father, our protector, our saviour.

“ So far as Muslims are concerned they sincerely think and feel that the great Mahatmaji laid down his precious life for the sake of Muslims and Muslims alone. He indeed laid down his precious life on the altar of the country's peace and unity. He watered and manured the plant of concord and harmony by his very blood.

“ He has gone before us, but his spirit is with us, behind us, about us, above us and all around us. The body, great philosophers say, is only a shadow of the soul; that great soul has become shadowless; it has become all light. He was a tower of strength to us. He was a beacon light, when we were surrounded and enveloped in the midst of the most troublous times. He has been in the mouth of us all; he is in the thoughts of all of us; he is enthroned in our hearts of hearts; he is in the bosom of ever-existing Divinity. We are not fortunate enough to have him for some more years, when we are face to face with unprecedented troubles, sufferings and tribulations. The only homage we can pay him is to follow his light and his foot-steps which he has left on the sands of time; we regard him as the father of Indian Nation. He not only preached but practised the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. With these few words, with all the sincerity which I could command, I commend this solemn resolution to the acceptance of this House.”

* SRI P. R. K. SARMA :—“ Sir, I shall be failing in my duty if I do not associate myself with this resolution and say a few sorrowful words on this occasion. Mahatma Gandhi lived and died for the elevation of mankind and the obliteration of all differences in the world, between races and races, between castes and castes, between communities and communities and between nations and nations. This ideal of life he strove hard to achieve through the means of Non-Violence and love of Truth. He believed that only that freedom that is achieved by the purest methods will live for ever. There have been great men and personalities in the history of the world who have lived and died for great objects and have been murdered like Mahatma Gandhi. One thing which differentiated Mahatma Gandhi is that he is one who belonged to us and of whom we were proud. He wanted that, not only should the objects and ideals be pure and high, but those ideals should be reached with the purest of means. In our own times we have seen equally great men, great because of their deeds and achievements.

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There is the example of Lenin whose achievements will ever remain green in the pages of world's history; the world admires Lenin; the world will never forget Lenin. But with regard to Lenin and others like him, it cannot be forgotten that they believed in the principle of the end justifying the means. As long as men follow the policy of the end justifying the means, there can be no lasting peace in the world.

I say this as one belonging to the working classes and their organizations still striving hard to establish socialism in the country and to eliminate all differences between man and man. Mahatma Gandhi has taught us both by his example and precept that not only political freedom but also economic freedom and every kind of freedom can be achieved not by violence but by non-violence and truth. To the working classes he was the real friend and leader. The Trade Union movement and the working class organizations in this country owe their development mainly to Mahatma Gandhi. Trade Unions were established under the inspiration of Mahatma Gandhi's satyagraha in South Africa. The oldest Trade Union in India, the Madras Textile Workers organization was started under the inspiration of Mahatma Gandhi when he was fighting his brave battle in South Africa. If the question had been put to Mahatma Gandhi as to what he would do, if he had nothing to do with politics, he would have said that he would retire and live somewhere near the workers of Ahmadabad, that he would lead the Ahmadabad Trade Unions to greater glory. He taught humanity and the whole world that noble aims should be achieved by noble means. If the means were not pure and perfect, he would rather sacrifice his objects. India wanted him to live, he also wanted to live. He died at the hands of an assassin.

"We have attained political freedom, but economic freedom is yet to be attained; for attaining that freedom perhaps more bitter struggles would have to be faced. But if the working classes set before themselves and follow faithfully the principles of non-violence and truth given to them by Mahatma Gandhi, I am sure socialism will be achieved in this country without violence even as political freedom has been attained.

"I wish to stress on this occasion that Mahatma Gandhi believed in the fundamental principles of the Trade Union movement and in the principles of conciliation, negotiation and arbitration not only as between employers and employees, but also between races and races and countries and countries and Governments and Governments. I think that by the pursuit of the same principles the differences that now exist between the two great nations will be settled amicably. It is on this principle that the League of Nations which has since disappeared was started and the United Nations Organization is based on the principles for which Mahatma lived and died, in the principles of negotiation and conciliation and settlement of differences between peoples and peoples in a spirit of goodwill, understanding and cordiality. This spirit and these principles for which Mahatma lived and died are more necessary to-day than ever in our country and in the

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world. Mahatma Gandhi a few hours before his death has written a significant article in the *Harijan* wherein he has stated that political freedom is only a means to an end, namely, economic freedom, social freedom and moral freedom and these are yet to be achieved and the political freedom must be utilized towards that end. He has said : ' If I live, I shall work for it '. I am sure that the working class will faithfully follow the principles preached by Mahatma Gandhi and attain all their objectives. Gandhiji may not be in our midst to-day ; Mahatma Gandhi might have died but Gandhism will live for ever."

MR. PRESIDENT :—" I now request the House to pass the resolution standing with a short prayer. (The House stood.)

' Oh Almighty Lord, Thou in Thy infinite wisdom hast gathered unto Thyself Thy most humble and loyal servant, our Father, Mahatma Gandhi, who devoted all his life to the mission of establishing Thy Kingdom on earth. With immeasurable trust and confidence in Thee, many a time, he braved death itself in defence and vindication of Truth and Ahimsa and by Thy grace, every time he came out not only unscathed, but with heightened spiritual stature.

' We, poor mortals, believed that he was under Thy special care and protection and Thou wouldst not allow him to shake off his mortal coil before his mission was fulfilled. To our everlasting grief Thou hast suffered him to be taken away from our midst and that by the hand of an assassin even while he was engaged heart and soul in Thy work and at a moment when his presence here was needed more than ever before'. Truly Thy ways are inscrutable and ours is only to obey and trust in Thy providence.

' Vouchsafe unto us such fortitude, courage, self-confidence and trust in Thy wisdom which alone can enable us to bear this stupendous loss. It is not given to us to know Thy divine dispensation ; Our beloved motherland, nay the entire world, is passing through critical days ; confronted with grave crises ; the horizon is beset with dark clouds of hatred and suspicion, envy and jealousy ; brother is raising his hand against brother ; the worst human passions are trying to get the upper hand and destroy Thy entire creation.

' Thy servant, the Father of our nation, was a " Friend of all things that are, ever at peace with himself, and all around of love and compassion all compact " and was striving his best to establish peace and harmony on earth.

' Oh our Father in Heaven, bestow Thy grace on Thy departed servant that his living spirit may continue to lead and guide us in the difficult times ahead and give us also a worthy successor to lead us safely out of the present chaos and confusion to universal peace and harmony.

' Grant unto us mutual goodwill and toleration that by Thy grace we may carry forward and complete the noble task left unfinished by Thy messenger on earth.

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' He desired not that kind of peace which comes from withdrawal into solitude and concentration on the inner divinity but he passionately longed to establish peace and harmony all round through the ennoblement of human personality and desired for himself only that peace which cometh from contemplation of such an ideal state of existence.

' May we beseech Thee to grant that his soul may attain that kind of peace and contentment through Thy grace and merciful dispensation.

Amen ! ! !

Om Shanti : Shanti : Shanti : "

The Resolution was carried, *nem con.*

The House was adjourned to meet again at 11 a.m. on the 21st February 1948.



